

PANTY HOSE

A little after 5:00 the curb in front of the Bank of America is rich with typists holding their cold elbows and waiting for boys who are pale and hairy, who play a little guitar, always have some good dope and do not work.

These girls in their panty hose are sowing their wild oats now because soon each will leave the hair and the ribs-that-show for their legacy, the movie Mom ran every day of their lives.

Already they hate their husbands for sucking up to big shots, for voting Republican and pointing out creeps in vans. They will never love anybody like they do the one who is always late. They will never look up and down the street so eagerly, not even when dinner is ice cold and someone in a new Country Squire has just been involved in a terrible crash.

DOPE

Sports Illustrated breaks The Fixer story and people start calculating my folly, telling me how they knew all along. I listen a little but mostly I look: They're all lit up. This has made their day.

"Well," I say, "when somebody's cheating it usually shows. That's why I check the probable exacta payoffs. Funny stuff sticks out. So either you lay off or get out some more 5's and bet the hot cripples."

"What are you talking about?" they say. "It doesn't work like that. It's all here how they cheated you. Look!" They're on the muscle. Their eyes are rolling. They're sweating. It looks like somebody slipped them something when they weren't looking.

A WELL-DRESSED MAN

bursts into the apartment of a naked woman and at gunpoint orders her to put on some panties, then a bra and slip followed by a skirt and sweater set under a tunic covered

by a trenchcoat topping tall boots. As she
pulls a hat down over her ears, he cries out
in ecstasy and stains his trousers which he
quickly changes while she holds the gun,
panting with excitement.

A MAN IN ALABAMA FIGHTS THE DRYNESS

by digging his own
well

so relentlessly
that he pops out
of the earth

between two Chinese.

He cannot see faces,
only feel warm
smooth stomachs.

They say, "Get out
of here," tumbling
him back to the States

where his wife finds
him sitting on the edge
of the hole.

"What happened?"

"I wish I knew," he says
touching his cheek still
warm

thinking about his son still
in Viet-Nam bursting
into tears.

-- Ronald Koertge

South Pasadena CA

you breathe out
knowing as you breathe out
there is nothing at the end
of that breath
to do

there is in me
so much song
yet my pen
falters
at a crumb!